

Application Number 10/777,391
Amendment dated April 24, 2008
Response to Office Action mailed January 30, 2008

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
receiving, with a network device, a packet having containing a first class of service (CoS) information, wherein the first CoS information specifies a class of service [that]] for the packet in a format that conforms to a first network protocol used within a network;

storing, within the network device, intermediate CoS information that provides a universal classification mechanism independent of: (i) any layer two protocols used within the network, and (ii) protocols of layers on top of layer two protocols used within the network;

accessing the first CoS information within the packet to determine the class of service for the packet;

mapping the first CoS information to a second CoS information using the intermediate CoS information, wherein the second CoS information specifies the class of service for the packet in a format that conforms to a second network protocol used within the network; and

outputting the packet with the network device to forwarding the packet within the network in accordance with the second network protocol, the packet containing the second CoS information that specifies the class of service information for the packet in accordance the second network protocol CoS information.

Claim 2 (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein mapping comprises:

applying a first policy to map the first CoS information to the intermediate CoS information; and

applying a second policy to map the intermediate CoS information to the second CoS information.

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Claim 3 (Original) The method of claim 2,
wherein the first policy comprises a protocol-specific policy in accordance with the first network protocol, and
wherein the second policy comprises a protocol-specific policy in accordance with the second network protocol

Claim 4 (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:
presenting a user interface to receive input; and
configuring the first policy and the second policy based on the input.

Claim 5 (Original) The method of claim 1,
wherein receiving a packet comprises receiving the packet with a first interface of a network device; and
wherein forwarding the packet comprises forwarding the packet with a second interface of the network device.

Claim 6 (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the first interface is associated with a first interface card of a network router, and the second interface is associated with a second interface card of the network router.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, further comprising:
updating, with the first interface, data included within the packet ~~with the first interface~~ to include the intermediate CoS information; and
communicating the packet and the intermediate CoS information from the first interface to the second interface.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein updating the data included within the packet ~~with the first interface~~ comprises adding a header to the data of the packet that specifies the intermediate CoS information.

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Claim 9 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein forwarding the packet comprises:

removing the intermediate CoS information from the data of the packet with the second interface;

updating the data of the packet to include the second CoS information; and

forwarding the packet with the second CoS information with the second interface.

Claim 10 (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the intermediate CoS information comprises protocol-independent metadata associated with the packet.

Claim 11 (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first CoS information and the second CoS information each comprise one of Internet Protocol (IP) Type of Service (ToS) information, Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) experimental (EXP) bits, Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN) user priority information, and Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) traffic class information.

Claim 12 (Original) The method of claim 1,
wherein receiving a packet comprises receiving the packet with a router; and
wherein forwarding the packet comprises forwarding the packet with the router.

Claim 13 (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein forwarding the packet comprises forwarding the packet with a centralized forwarding engine of the router.

Claim 14 (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein forwarding the packet comprises forwarding the packet with a forwarding component within an interface card of the router.

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Claim 15 (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a first interface to receive a packet ~~having containing data including a first class of service~~ (CoS) information that conforms to a first network protocol, ~~wherein the first interface access the data of the packet to determine the first CoS information, and map[[s]] the first CoS information to intermediate CoS information by updating the data of the packet, wherein the intermediate CoS information provides a universal classification mechanism independent of any layer two protocols and protocols of layers on top of layer two protocols used by the network device~~; and

a second interface to map the intermediate CoS information to a second CoS information that conforms to a second network protocol by updating the data of the packet.

Claim 16 (Original) The system of claim 15,

wherein the first interface applies a first policy to map the first CoS information to the intermediate CoS information; and

wherein the second interface applies a second policy to map the intermediate CoS information to the second CoS information.

Claim 17 (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the first policy comprises a protocol-specific policy in accordance with the first network protocol, and the second policy comprises a protocol-specific policy in accordance with the second network protocol

Claim 18 (Original) The system of claim 16, further comprising a management module to present a user interface to receive input, and configure the first policy and the second policy based on the input.

Claim 19 (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the first interface is associated with a first interface card of a network router, and the second interface is associated with a second interface card of the network router.

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Claim 20 (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15, wherein the first interface updates the data of the packet by adding the intermediate CoS information to the data of the packet, and communicates the updated packet having and the intermediate CoS information to the second interface.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20, wherein the second interface removes the intermediate CoS information from the packet, and updates the data of the packet by adding the second CoS information to the packet.

Claim 22 (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the intermediate CoS information comprises protocol-independent metadata associated with the packet.

Claim 23 (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the first CoS information and the second CoS information each comprise one of Internet Protocol (IP) Type of Service (ToS) information; Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) experimental (EXP) bits, Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN) user priority information, and Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) traffic class information.

Claim 24 (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the first interface comprises a logical interface associated with the first protocol, and the second interface comprises a logical interface associated with the second protocol.

Claim 25 (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the first interface is associated with a first interface card, and the second interface is associated with the second interface card.

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Claim 26 (Currently Amended) A network device comprising:
a control unit that:
stores intermediate class of service (CoS) information that provides a universal classification mechanism independent of any layer two protocols and protocols of layers on top of layer two protocols used by the network device;
associates the intermediate CoS (CoS) information with a packet based on data within the packet that defines to map first CoS information, class of service (CoS) information wherein the first CoS information that conforms with a first network protocol; and
maps the associated intermediate CoS information to second CoS information, wherein the second CoS information that conforms to a second network protocol.

Claim 27 (Original) The network device of claim 27, wherein the network device applies policies to map the first CoS information to the intermediate CoS information and to map the intermediate CoS information to the second CoS information.

Claim 28 (Original) The network device of claim 26, wherein the network device comprises a router.

Claim 29 (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium storing a computer program that comprises comprising instructions to cause a processor to:
receive a packet having data including a first class of service (CoS) information, wherein the first CoS information that conforms to a first network protocol;
store intermediate CoS information that provides a universal classification mechanism independent of any layer two protocols and protocols of layers on top of layer two protocols used by a network device;
access the data of the packet to determine the first CoS information; and
process the data of the packet including the first CoS information to include the intermediate CoS information for mapping the first CoS information to a second CoS information that conforms to a second network protocol by updating the data of the packet.

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Claim 30 (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 29, ~~further~~
wherein the computer program further comprises ~~comprising~~ instructions to cause the processor
to apply a policy to the packet to generate the intermediate CoS information from the first CoS
information.

Claim 31 (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 30, wherein the policy comprises
a protocol-specific policy in accordance with the first network protocol.

Claim 32 (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 29, wherein the intermediate CoS
information comprises protocol-independent metadata associated with the packet.

Claim 33 (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 29, wherein the first CoS
information comprises one of Internet Protocol (IP) Type of Service (ToS) information,
Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) experimental (EXP) bits, Virtual Local Area Network
(VLAN) user priority information, and Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) traffic class
information.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
processing a packet with a first interface of a network device to access data within the
packet;
associating[[e]] the packet with metadata based on the data within the packet, wherein the
metadata that defines protocol-independent class of service (CoS) policy information, and
wherein the protocol-independent CoS information provides a universal classification
mechanism and is independent of any layer two protocols and protocols of layers on top of layer
two used by the network device to forward packets within a network; and
subsequently processing the packet with a second interface of the network device in
accordance with the protocol-independent CoS policy information.

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Claim 35 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 34,

wherein processing ~~[[a]]the~~ packet comprises applying a first policy to the packet to map the packet to the protocol-independent ~~CoS~~policy information, wherein the first policy is specific to a first network protocol, and

wherein subsequently processing the packet comprises mapping the protocol-independent ~~policy~~ CoS information to a second policy that is specific to a second network protocol, and applying the second policy to the packet.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35,

wherein applying ~~[[a]]the~~ first policy comprises applying the first policy to first header information of the packet, wherein the first header information conforms to ~~[[a]]the~~ first network protocol, and

wherein applying ~~[[a]]the~~ second policy comprises applying the second policy to second header information of the packet, wherein the second header information conforms to ~~[[a]]the~~ second network protocol.

Claim 37 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 34, further comprising:

storing the protocol-independent ~~CoS~~ policy information as metadata within a memory of ~~[[a]]the~~ network device; and

associating the metadata with the packet throughout an entire packet-processing path of the network device.

Claim 38 (Cancelled).